

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0667

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, EFIN, EAID, PINT, JM
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY PRODUCTION TASK FORCE FORMED

1. THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT HAS APPOINTED A TASK FORCE
TO PREPARE PLANS FOR ITS "EMERGENCY PRODUCTION PROGRAMME".
THE TASK FORCE IS HEADED BY SENATOR RICHARD FLETCHER,
MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING AND PROJECTS IN THE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, AND CONSISTS OF TEN GROUPS TO DEAL WITH
PARTICULAR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. THE GROUPS, AND
THEIR LEADERS, ARE:

AGRICULTURE	DR. GEORGE BECKFORD
MANUFACTURING	ROBERT GORDON AND LAWRENCE WELLS
CONSTRUCTION	DR. FITZ FORD AND CLOVIS MCLEAN
FUEL AND ENERGY	TREVOR BYER
BAUXITE & ALUMINA	DR. CARLTON DAVIS
EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER	

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UTILIZATION	BILL VIRTUE AND MILTON SCOTT
FISCAL AFFAIRS	DR. HUNTLEY MANHERTZ
TOURISM	MRS. SHIRLEY FLETCHER
FOREIGN EXCHANGE	DR. COMPTON BOURNE
MOBILIZATION	DR. LOUIS LINDSAY

COORDINATION OF THE TASK FORCE WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY DR. NORMAN GIRVAN WHO HAS RECENTLY TAKEN OVER AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING AGENCY.

3. THE COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE AND THE MANNER IN WHICH ITS EXISTENCE WAS FIRST REVEALED OFFER COMMENT ON THE STYLE AND DIRECTION OF THE NEW JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT.

4. BREAKING THE NEWS - THE DECISION TO FORMULATE AN "EMERGENCY PRODUCTION PLAN" WAS MADE CLEAR IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S JANUARY 19 ADDRESS. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT A TASK FORCE WOULD HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE JOB OF PUTTING THE PLAN TOGETHER BECAME KNOWN ONLY WHEN THE RADICAL LEFTIST MINISTER OF NATIONAL MOBILIZATION, DR. D.K. DUNCAN, CALLED A MEETING OF TRADE UNION LEADERS TO DISCUSS THEIR PART IN - AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR - INCREASING PRODUCTION. (THAT ACTION ALONE PROVIDES SOME EVIDENCE OF THE LEADING ROLE THAT DR. DUNCAN IS EXPECTED TO PLAY IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT; ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE TASK FORCE CHAIRMAN, MINISTER OF STATE FLETCHER, WOULD HAVE ASSUMED THE ABOVE ROLE.) SINCE THAT MEETING (WHICH THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT CLASSIFIED AS "CONFIDENTIAL") THE EXISTENCE OF THE TASK FORCE HAS BEEN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED BY MINISTER OF STATE FLETCHER.

5. COMPOSITION - WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE INFORMATION ON ALL OF THE TASK FORCE MEMBERS, THE VIEWS AND/OR REPUTATIONS OF SEVERAL ARE RELATIVELY WELL KNOWN. CONFIDENTIAL

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(A) CHAIRMAN FLETCHER IS A MARXIST. THERE IS AN ONGOING DEBATE AS TO WHETHER A PREDILECTION FOR PRAGMATISM AND A COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC FORMS CONTROL HIS VIEWS OR WHETHER HE IS MORE RADICAL. WE PRESENTLY OPT FOR THE FORMER VIEW, AND THUS THINK HE MAY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE MORE ARDENTLY LEFTIST DUNCAN.

(B) DR. GIRVAN, THE TASK FORCE COORDINATOR, HAS BEEN A CLOSE ASSOCIATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (UWI) OF SUCH EXTREME LEFTISTS AS TREVOR MUNROE (WHO HEADS UP THE COMMUNIST "WORKERS' LIBERATION LEAGUE") AND HIS FELLOW TASK FORCE MEMBER, GEORGE BECKFORD. GIRVAN HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN SUCH BLACK POWER GROUPS AS "ABENG" AND THE "NEW WORLD GROUP". AS AN INDICATOR OF HIS THINKING, GIRVAN, IN A SPEECH AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY IN 1972, REPORTEDLY ADVOCATED OUTRIGHT EXPROPRIATION OF FOREIGN COMPANIES OPERATING IN THE CARIBBEAN.

(C) GOERGE BECKFORD, WHO HEADS THE AGRICULTURE GROUP,

IS CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT AT UWI. HE IS A CO-FOUNDER OF THE "NEW WORLD GROUP," AND IS ALLEGED TO HAVE LINKS WITH A VARIETY OF CARIBBEAN BLACK POWER GROUPS, FRENCH LEFTISTS, PUERTO RICAN RADICAL INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS AND CUBANS. HE HAS TRAVELED TO CUBA A NUMBER OF TIMES; MOST RECENTLY, HE ACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON AND MOBILIZATION MINISTER D.K. DUNCAN ON THEIR VISIT TO HAVANA (SEE KINGSTON 0117).

(D) DR. CARLTON DAVIS, WHO HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A "HARD-CORE SUPPORTER OF TREVOR MUNROE."

(E) LOUIS LINDSAY, WHO HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THE "NEW WORLD GROUP" AND THE JAMAICAN COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (WHOSE LAST EXTRAVAGANZA STARRED PHILIP AGEY).

6. A MORE THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE "TASK FORCE"
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MUST AWAIT SURFACING OF THE "EMERGENCY PRODUCTION PROGRAMME." THE GENERAL GUIDELINES GIVEN THE TASK FORCE DO NOT THEMSELVES SUGGEST THAT A LEFTWARD SHIFT IS NECESSARILY INTENDED. THEY ONLY REQUIRE THAT EACH COMMITTEE FOCUS PARTICULAR ATTENTION ON:

"AN EVALUATION OF EXISTING PRODUCTION POTENTIAL.

"AN APPROXIMATION OF PRODUCTION TARGETS FOR 1977.

" AN ESTIMATE OF RESOURCES REQUIREMENTS.

"MOBILIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS."

HOWEVER, GIVEN DUNCAN'S MIDWIFE ROLE AT THE BIRTH OF THE TASK FORCE, AND THE LEFTIST CHARACTER OF THOSE MEMBERS ABOUT WHOM WE ALREADY KNOW SOMETHING, IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE CONCLUSION -ALBEIT STILL TENTATIVE - THAT THE PLAN WILL RECOMMEND A VERY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION INTO THE ECONOMY.
GERARD

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